

LOUDWATER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No. 48

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Guest Editor: John Jarrett, Martha's Vineyard, Violet Way

WHERE WE STARTED

The ever-willing Dorothy Francis has at last insisted she have a short break, so I'm doing this Newsletter, which puts me back to where, 13 years ago, I started it. In June 1975, Jim Davis and Wally Paterson finally became disillusioned at the small support they received and resigned as the L.R.A.'s only officers. Four of us felt the LRA should not be let die and re-started it — Jack Cognet (alas, about to leave us) as Chairman, Annie Wolf (now in France), Cyril Brine and myself. There were 32 paid members, the assets were £282 and that was it. Now there are over 300 members, assets are over £1800, we have (usually) two social events a year and this is the 48th Newsletter. A tale of success? Yes, and two more successes are repeated next — but they both sound a warning note. (J.J.)

THE A.G.M.

Our AGM was held on a pleasant evening on May 19. The meeting at Chorleywood House is usually packed for this — but not this time. Why? The weather too good? Everyone satisfied with what the Committee is doing? Don't feel it's worth making any effort to keep this community together to protect our beautiful place? It is that way still only because public-spirited people have worked persistently in the face of apathy, pressure from developers and a few philistine spirits who feel they are a law unto themselves. Every year some of our old supporters go, so there must always be support from newcomers if we are all to preserve what is good in Loudwater.

Luckily, even from the reduced numbers at the AGM there were people willing to take new responsibility and we welcome as new Committee Members Geoffrey Crook (Chess Hill), Anne Tate (Rooks Hill) and Desmond Martin (L. Lane). They replace Dick Bilton, Hugh Brewster and Mary Filose who resigned (all good wishes to Mary on her re-marriage).

At the meeting Chairman Barnaby Osborne reported on the Committee's six meetings during the year and the main issues — planning applications, Neighbourhood Watch, the Garden Party, the musical evening, the threat of Loudwater being moved into Bucks etc. There were especial thanks to Don Cammell for his work on planning applications. Jim Davis reported on the position of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme where there were several vacancies. He also warned members about door-to-door salesmen. After the formal business was over, there was time for a general airing of views on, for example, the increase in litter caused by contractors, dustmen or (it can't be ruled out) our children.

The guest speaker was Mr. Hugh Potter of the West Herts Country Management Service, the Government and Council-funded body that provides expert help and labour to preserve open spaces. His interesting slides described bridlepath clearing, using fibre-glass matting to repair muddy paths, pond clearing and wild flower sanctuaries, both relevant to Chorleywood Common's 200 acres.

(Dorothy Francis)

THE GARDEN PARTY

I overheard someone say: "We're always blessed with lovely weather for the Garden Party." They were right — this year it was glorious again.

One hundred and twenty residents and about fifty children came to the party on June 19 at Handa, T. Rise, home of Mario and Margaret Bianchin for a sunny day, agreeable company and beautiful surroundings. So many people worked

to make it a success — behind the bar, clearing up, at the door — we can't thank them all but special thanks to Maurice Escow and Barnaby Osborne who carried the main brunt. The bouquet of flowers Barnaby presented to Margaret Bianchin was only a token of our thanks for letting us use the lovely garden.

Our Garden Party, held once a year, is *the* special opportunity for Loudwater residents to meet one another in a very special way. If, this year, you didn't come — perhaps because of poor weather beforehand, or you hadn't realised how important it is to meet your neighbours — do try and come next year. It matters to you and the LRA and you'll be surprised how much you'll enjoy yourself.

(Sue Tippen)

THIS AND THAT

Our Musical Evening had to be cancelled due to an unfortunate confusion about dates. Our apologies to all, and thanks to everyone for being so nice about the inconvenience. Our regrets too to Neill Grant-Richardson who'd put so much work into it.

We'll try again next year but in the meantime it's been suggested we have a repeat of our highly successful Loudwater residents' Arts and Crafts show. Anyone who has talent in this line that they'd be willing to show (and perhaps sell), please contact Dorothy Francis.

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It's often assumed Three Rivers has a statutory duty to inform householders of any planning application affecting them. Not so. They do more than most, but the only way to be sure you know about any planning application near you is to keep an eye on the list regularly published. It appears each week in the Watford Observer, is posted outside Basing House and Chorleywood House, is available at the Planning Office behind Basing House, and we list them here. BUT, if yours isn't delivered promptly or not read promptly, you may run out of time.

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The police have again asked us to stress that they welcome calls about suspicious acts — don't worry about wasting their time: they prefer ten unnecessary calls to letting one criminal go. Because they still have a problem telephone system, if it's urgent — young joggers, for instance, who seem to rest a long time between houses — use the 999 call, not Ricky police. It's relayed at once to patrol cars.

* * *

The LRA has sent a copy of its last newsletter to Richard Page MP so he can see how much concern there is about development pressure. The Chorleywood Residents' Association has expressed its concern. Mr. Page has replied expressing support. Have a heart, Mr. Ridley!

OUR MUNTJACS

Since the muntjacs seem now to be permanent passers-by through Loudwater, a few natural history notes may be of interest. Muntjacs came originally from Southern Asia, Java, Sumatra and Borneo. Ours are probably established escapees from zoos and private collections in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.

Ours is the Indian Muntjac or Barking Deer. They stand 20-22 ins. at the shoulder and weigh less than 50 lbs. The antlers are about 5 in. long and protrude down each side of the face as ridges. The canine teeth stick out slightly below

the lips. The colour is basically chestnut with a white underside.

They are usually single or in pairs in thick undergrowth, but come out to feed on shrubs and grasses in clearings. The call, like a small dog barking, is usually heard in early morning or late evening. The shorter rapid barks are alarm signals. In the natural habitat the antlers are shed in May/June and the rut is in the colder weather. One or two young are born, and keep some white markings until six months old.

The Editor would be grateful for details of sightings, so the route they use can be established and whether we have more than one pair. I have only once seen a pair, I believe a female and a youngster. My last sighting was about 4p.m. on June 26 on the usual route, the T. Way — Violet Way woods through our grounds into Mont Au Source. The night before, the male barked about midnight.

DIG, DIG, DIG

Everywhere round Loudwater seems to be being dug up now or in months to come. For those who have asked the Editor what on earth is going on, I report that two you needn't worry about, but one is going to be murder!

DIG ONE: The upheaval on Croxley Green will be over in a few months. Its reason is that the Rickmansworth Water Company is laying a new main through to Hunton Green. All the top-soil that has been removed has been put aside and will be relaid before the whole thing finishes some time between September and December, so not to worry. (If only builders could be forced to be as neat and caring when they work on new houses or extensions in Loudwater — we're tired of the potholes in Sarratt Lane!)

DIG TWO: Recent excavations carried out on the former Highland Water Gardens site in Solesbridge Lane have revealed the existence of a large Roman settlement to the East of the Chess: archaeologists believe they have found its rubbish dump! But the excavation has also yielded an unexpected and rare find, in fact virtually unknown on Roman sites — a purpose-built timber bridge. The first hint of a Roman settlement here came in the 1950s when a local archaeologist found some Roman pottery and a coin dating back to the fourth century AD. Little more was done until Mr. Richard Sankey bought the property last summer and began work on extending the trout lakes. A Roman tile came to light and the Herts. Archaeological Trust was called in.

The Trust's site director, Mr. Stewart Bryant, told the Watford Observer: "We are on the fringes of a Roman Villa, a large estate centering on thousands of acres running up the valley. We are now in the area where they dumped rubbish." The excavations, jointly funded by English Heritage, Three Rivers D.C. and Herts. C.C., suggest that the Chess probably formed the Western boundary of the complex, and that some time between 150-350AD, an easy access was made across the river for pedestrians and other estate traffic. The digging team were particularly intrigued at finding a series of post holes across the line of the river, and they believe these were the remains of a small bridge. Other items found include domestic refuse — pottery pieces, animal bones and some Roman metalwork — and these should give a valuable insight into the estate's economy.

By the later fourth century, the river seems to have altered course, and the land it left reclaimed and laid out as enclosures. It's thought that the villa was in decline by the late fourth to early fifth century.

The Trust hopes to carry out further small-scale excavation at the end of the year to the south of the present site. Mr. Bryant's hopes are that further evidence of the settlement may be found and possibly ancillary estate buildings or even the main villa complex. N.T. (With thanks to the H.A.T. for allowing use of S.R. Bryant's "Summary report of the excavations carried out at the Tropical Marine Centre, Chorleywood).

DIG THREE: This will not happen for two years, we are told, but I will be astonished if there is not a howl of protest when it gets under way. Despite the scheme having been reported in the local paper, few people seem to have envisaged the full horror of what we are going to see.

Conoco oil company intends to lay pipeline from its port facilities at Immingham through to a depot at Langley, Berks. Permission for such pipelines are given directly by Government and local authority at any level has officially no say in the matter. At one stage in its passage, this pipeline comes through Sarratt into and through the grounds of Chorleywood House and through Chorleywood Common before exiting towards Denham.

Now the pipeline itself seems a fairly modest affair of only six foot width. But the machine that digs the trench for this pipeline will cut a *sixty foot* scar across the route

Now we have all seen the advertisements on television for oil companies showing how invisible their depredations on the landscape are when it is all over — earth still green, rivers still flowing etc. But it is already clear that three houses are at risk and that the Chorleywood Golf Course will be out of action for some time and that Chorleywood House may lose its tennis courts. Above all, no oil company can replant large mature trees that will go from Chorleywood House grounds and from the Chorleywood Common.

And we may expect this sixty foot scar on the landscape to be there for at least a year — and how long it will take after for its damage to be repaired is anyone's guess.

The one piece of good news is that the Three Rivers District Council, although realising that it has no *locus standi* in the case, is nevertheless attempting to persuade the Government to ask the oil company to vary the pipeline's route. Anyone who feels strongly about this should write NOW to Richard Page MP — because oil companies plan well in advance and aren't easily shifted. No one is saying that oil companies don't have a right to try to move their supplies more economically, and every gallon that goes through the pipeline means one less gallon to be carried on tankers clogging up our roads. But need the cost to the environment we live in and love be so high?

OPENING OUR SCORE

We've had celebrities of almost every kind in Loudwater, but as far as I know, never one yet in the sporting field. Welcome therefore to our new resident, Mr. Clive Radley, Cricket fans will know Mr. Radley as a fine bat and sharp fielder who in a distinguished career with Middlesex was often on the verge of a regular Test team place. A long Loudwater innings to him.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 8/004/88 Briar Cottage, Chess Lane. Two-storey side extension. (Granted — LRA opposed)
- 8/006/88 Briar Cottage, Chess Lane. Detached dwelling. (Refused — the LRA opposed)
- 8/0252/88 Sundorne, Sarratt Lane. First floor extension, single front extension to form garage.
- 8/034/88 Chelmadine, T. Way. Two-storey front extension.
- 8/0320/88 Parkholme, L. Lane. Two-storey side and rear extensions
- 8/0385/88 Loudwater Cottage, L. Lane. Two-storey rear extension, front porch, detached double garage, summer house.
- 8/0387/88 Whitestock Farm, L. Lane. Single-storey side extension and front porch.
- 8/0402/88 4, Ladywood Close. New conservatory, gable roof, dormer windows.
- 8/0407/88 Cherry Cottage, T. Way. First floor side and rear extension.
- 8/0432/88 Oakway House, Bridle Lane. Conversion of flat garage roof to gable.
- 8/0557/88 Thorpland, Sarratt Lane. Two-storey side extension, part two-storey front extension, first floor rear, part two and single-storey side extension. (Opposed)
- 8/0562/88 Broad Oaks, T. Rise. Erection of detached dwelling. (Opposed)
- 8/0583/88 The Coppice, Kingfisher Lure. Two-storey side extension.
- 8/0586/88 Rookery Nook, V. Way. Erection of three detached dwellings. (Opposed)
- 8/0614/88 8 Ladywood Close. Loft conversion.